



DCF Provider News: A Resource for Wisconsin Shares & YoungStar Providers

Preparing for MyWIChildCare: Tips for a Successful Transition

Providers are preparing for MyWIChildCare. Here are some tips to help you avoid the possibility of overpayments and prepare for the new program.

- **Never keep a client's MyWIChildCare EBT card, Account Number, or PIN.** If you or your staff is found in possession of another parent's EBT card, Account Number, or PIN, you may be issued an overpayment and/or permanently suspended from the program. Do not risk it. Never ask for your client's EBT cards!

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- **Do not cash out and pay the parent any portion of their Wisconsin Shares funds.** Never cash out a client's Wisconsin Shares funds and return these funds to the parent in any manner. If you do so, you may be issued an overpayment and/or permanently suspended from the program.
- **Overpaid.** If you think you have been overpaid, first communicate with the parent as to why an overpayment may have occurred. This will help determine if an error was made, and how to prevent this error in the future. Next, communicate this to your local child care agency. If at any point you would like to voluntarily return funds that you believe have been overpaid to you by the Wisconsin Shares program, you should contact your local child care agency and they will assist you with this process.
- **Return funds for children you have not provided care for.** If you receive funds for a child you have never provided care for, this is likely the mistake of your county or tribe. Please contact the county or tribe to make them aware of the situation. Also, if a child has not attended your facility for more than 30 days, you should contact your county or tribe to make them aware of the situation. If you do not report receiving these funds, an overpayment will still be assessed and those funds recovered.
- **Periods of closure.** If your facility is going to be closed for five days or longer due to vacation, holiday, repairs to the facility, etc., you should report this to your licenser and your local child care agency. You should also notify your clients of any closures occurring at your child care facility.
- **Maintain Accurate Daily Attendance Records (also referred to as Sign In Sign Out Sheets (SISO)).** Attendance Records must be maintained for three years after the child has left your facility. Additionally, the times on the Attendance Records should never be rounded. They should be accurate to the minute of each child's arrival and departure time. Do not alter the times after they have been written down, unless a mistake has been made. Finally, if you are a certified provider and have a child under the age of 7 who is in your home during child care hours, make sure to list them on the SISOs.
- **Overcapacity.** Do not exceed your maximum capacity. If you do, you are violating licensing rules. If this occurs, an overpayment may be assessed. Do your best to schedule parents efficiently so there is a decreased chance of going over capacity.

If you have any questions, please contact your local child care agency or visit the [Wisconsin Shares home page](#) for additional information.





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Policy Changes Regarding School Closures and Child Care Needs

As you may be aware, there are significant changes coming to the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program with the implementation of the MyWICildCare EBT cards. These changes affect both providers and parents.

YoungStar has encouraged child care programs to share a newsletter with parents on a number of different topics. DCF would like to offer content that could be included in your newsletters to help parents who are receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy understand changes what will affect them during this transition period.

The information below highlights an important change about child care needs during scheduled school closures and school closures due to inclement weather.

Under MyWICildCare there are important policy changes that parents should be aware of. One change is

that parents will need to identify their need for child care when school is scheduled to be closed. Parents who need child care when school is closed will need to ask for this additional time. Parents will need their child's school year calendar with them and be ready to discuss their need during their child care interview or authorization assessment. Parents can also request Wisconsin Shares subsidy for days when school is closed due to bad weather. If parents have an additional child care need that was unknown at the time the authorization was written, they must report this to their local agency within 10 calendar days of the additional need.



Get the latest YoungStar, Wisconsin Shares, and MyWICildCare updates by subscribing to our email list!

Subscribe here:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/email-signup>

Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Wisconsin's Blueprint

As a subcommittee of the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), the Healthy Children Committee has explored screening practices for young children (birth to age eight) with two goals:

- To align existing screening and assessment practices to assure a consistent approach across state agencies
- To ensure access to services for all children and families in Wisconsin.

Screening and assessment practices continue to be defined and carried out by some of the early childhood programs that "touch the lives of young children and their families," including child care and Head Start. The Blueprint includes a **Critical Time Periods for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment Visual Chart, Narrative and Fact Sheets** that are designed to inform universal screening practices during infancy and early childhood for the purpose of determining if further assessment is needed. The information from the **Critical Time Periods Chart** can

be used for conversations with families of children in child care and Head Start programs to support the recommended universal screening practices at the ages identified.

Screening and assessment processes provide a way to gather high quality, valid, and reliable information about how a child is developing and provides a foundation for informed action to support a child's healthy development. Recognizing that the Governor's ECAC is interested in creating systems that will have better and more consistent information about young children at key developmental milestones, the Department accepts the Blueprint as a guide for best practice for comprehensive developmental and health screening.

The Blueprint is available on the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners website at:

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/child-find-screening-resources.php>





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YoungStar Evaluation Criteria Updates for 2017/2018



Beginning in 2017, the Evaluation Criteria will be updated as needed every two years. The 2017/2018 Evaluation Criteria became available October 24, 2016 on the YoungStar website. General changes to the indicators includes age group selections in classrooms/groups. The indicators that need individual classroom verification will be for the following age groups: birth-35 months, 36-60 months, and school-age. In Day Camp evaluation criteria, the group selection for indicators that need individual group verification will be for the following age groups: 3-4 year olds (if enrolled), and 5 years and older.

There were no substantive changes to the Educational Qualifications component, the Learning Environment and Curriculum component, or the Business and Professional Practices component, with the exception of the Family Engagement category. In 2016, meeting the Family Engagement criteria was optional. In 2017, it is required for 3, 4, and 5 Star programs. 3 Star programs are required to achieve 1 point and 4 and 5 Star programs are required to achieve 2 points. Examples of family engagement activities have either been clarified or modified to better meet the program type.

More substantive changes were made in the Health and

Well-being component. The D.1.1 indicator, which has been earned by verifying CACFP participation and menu review now requires programs to utilize a process of self-assessment in the areas of nutrition and/or physical activity. The indicator remains required for 3, 4 and 5 Star programs. Areas that can be addressed in this indicator are nutrition, physical activity and physical skill development, gardening, and breastfeeding friendly practices.

D.1.2 has been modified to increase the amount of physical activity time required to earn the point and also to give programs more flexibility in demonstrating how they are meeting the intent of this indicator. The indicator also addresses screen time per day while children are at the program.

We would like to thank YoungStar stakeholders for their suggestions and assistance with clarifications or modifications to the evaluation criteria for 2017/2018. As a provider, if there are any suggestions that you would like to see for the next round of the evaluation criteria, please let your YoungStar consultant know.

New Head Start Performance Standards Released



In September 2016, a revised and reorganized version of the national [Head Start Performance Standards](#) was released. The US Department of Health and Human Services completed this holistic revision for the first time since the standards were originally published in 1975.

The standards, which are effective beginning November 2016, include the requirement that Head Start programs (with the exception of American Indian and Alaska Native programs) must participate in their state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) by August 1, 2017.

Wisconsin's QRIS, YoungStar, is looking forward to strengthening our partnerships with Head Start sites across the state and welcoming more than 120 new programs into the rating system!

Head Start sites that offer no child care services will continue to be monitored regularly by federal staff and will be awarded a 5 Star status in YoungStar based on the high standards that are required of Head Start programs.





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How Can My Program Support Physical Skill Development and Healthy Physical Activity for Indicator D.1.2?



What does it mean to be Teacher-Led or Child-Initiated?

The intent of this indicator is to improve how children are supported by best practices (developmentally appropriate) in physical activity and physical skill development.

Teacher-led is defined as the teacher engaging with children in the activities that children are choosing **OR**, the teacher is choosing specific activities to use for specific skill development for an individual child or a group of children. An example of teacher-led might be leading yoga exercises for children before naptime, as a transition activity. A teacher may be involved either as the other player or as the “coach” to a group of children working on catching skills. Another example one might see is a teacher working with children on how to ride a tricycle or bicycle, while giving direction on how to peddle and steer the tricycle/bicycle. The teacher may be helping with steering while the child is working on the peddling skill or in the case of a bicycle, the balance support.

The role of the teacher may differ throughout the day and may look different for each child. It could be modeling for infants and toddlers by doing dance movements with them, or crawling through boxes or tunnels. It might be a teacher participating in playground games with a group of older children and using movement descriptions to describe the concepts of movement (going near someone, fast or slow running, or big steps or small steps when working with a balance beam). (For a list of descriptors, the *Active Early* resource is available from the Child Care Resource and Referral offices, as well as many helpful activity resources for moving and learning.) It might look like a new gross motor skill game being taught to the children, or children playing a favorite game, and the teacher participating and reviewing the movements required in the game to work on skill development.

Remember to plan how the environment will be set up to allow for physical activity, both indoor and outdoor. Also, make note of the skills that need to be addressed on any assessment tool that the program is using.

Child-initiated is really unrestricted free time for children to explore their physical movement and should take place both indoors and outdoors. It may be a child involved in movement on a stationary play structure, or a child may be playing basketball with a group of friends or by themselves. Teachers should remember during child-initiated physical activity to **follow the child’s lead**.

“Anything we introduce with enthusiasm and fun always excites the children. There is the occasional child who says they do not want to participate, but they always join in eventually.”

Maggie Smith, R.E.A.L. K.I.D.S,
Menominee Falls

Participation by the teacher is highly encouraged even during this time, and can be seen as an **opportunity to facilitate play and scaffold the learning experiences**, and to **more carefully observe the children** in order to document their milestones. Remember to keep the area unobstructed where possible, and have safe activities available for the space the children are using for the physical activity free time. Resources are

essential in promoting physical activity and the YoungStar micro-grant is available for that purpose.

Consultants will verify the physical activity time through **one or more** of the following ways: observation of a classroom inside and/or outside time, review of 4 weeks of lesson plans, a check to see if applicable time is in the daily schedule and interview the teachers to understand how the practices are working. This allows for different ways that programs may identify their practices for this indicator. Your classroom or home environment sets the stage for physical activity.



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Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professionals (T-TAP) System

Wisconsin is launching a comprehensive effort towards a Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) System. This includes the development and use of WI Training and Technical Assistance Professional (T-TAP) Competencies (available on the WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners ([WECCP](http://www.wisconsinshares.org/early-childhood-collaborating-partners)) website).



One of the goals of the WECCP and the WI Early Childhood Cross-Sector Professional Development Initiative (WI PDI) is to strengthen and align cross-sector training and technical assistance for the early childhood

and related professionals workforce. A specialized portion of this workforce provides training and technical assistance to support others who work directly with children and families. Training and Technical Assistance (T-TA) Professionals require specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions to provide training and various types of technical assistance such as mentoring, coaching, consultation, professional development (PD) counseling, and peer-to-peer technical assistance. T-TA Professionals will benefit by having these statewide Competencies that outline best practices in supporting the workforce.

To further support the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of T-TA Professionals, three courses (18 hours) have been developed based the WI T-TAP Competencies.

- **Foundations Course** (6½ hours session) for both Training Professionals and Technical Assistance Professionals
- **Training Course** (7 hours session + 1 hour homework; Prerequisite: Foundations Course)
- **Technical Assistance Course** (7 hours session + 1 hour homework; Prerequisite: Foundations Course)

These courses will be part of The Registry Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) and may be required by some employers in Wisconsin as part of the job responsibility to provide training and technical assistance. These courses are replacing the previous Adult Learner and Consultant courses, which set the foundation for these continued efforts.

It is strongly encouraged that T-TA Professionals complete the new T-TAP courses as they have been designed to highlight the latest evidence-based practices and feature a collaborative approach to professional development in Wisconsin in the Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance Professionals Competencies. For more information, see [The Registry](http://www.wisconsinshares.org/early-childhood-collaborating-partners).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) New Meal Pattern

On April 25, 2016, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the final rule on the CACFP Meal Pattern that will go into effect October 1, 2017.

The new CACFP Meal Pattern will require more whole grains to be served and a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, and reduces the amount of added sugars and solid fats in meals. In addition, this final rule supports mothers who breastfeed and improves consistency with the Women, Infants, and Children and with other Child Nutrition Programs. These changes are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, science-based recommendations made by the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies), cost and practical considerations, and stakeholder's input. These improvements are expected to enhance the quality of meals served in CACFP to help young children learn healthy eating habits early on in their lives and improve the wellness of adult participants.

This is the first major revision of the CACFP Meal Patterns since the Program's inception in 1968.

Check out more information about the CACFP Meal Pattern at this link:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>.





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MECA Inclusion Credential Classes



The Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) in partnership with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) is offering Inclusion Credential classes in Milwaukee on Saturdays in January and February. The upcoming class titles and dates are:

- **ECE: Special Health Care Needs** - January 7, 14, 21, and 28; and February 4 and 11
- **ECE: Capstone** – Family & Team Centered Practices
 - Dates to be announced for the Capstone class. Please call 414-289-6977 for more information.
- **CCPI Provider Announcements** – watch for provider training meetings on MyWICChildCare EBT card and payment methods



Inclusion Credential Commission II from 9-17-2016

The child care providers in the picture all successfully completed 12 college credits and were approved by the Registry commissioner in September. Classes continue to be offered and more child care providers will be ready for the Capstone class and the commission next summer! **Front row (left to right):** Iris Dawson, Elise Tchoumen, Mary Stovall, Debbie Rueden, Angela Smith **Back row (left to right):** Makini Triplett, Charlotte Randolph, Tracee Medley, Mattie Pickens, Christina Mack, Jean Ottelien, Charella Powell, Divon Jefferson, Belinda Boykin-Smith

Going to Green Bay – 2016 Conference Highlights

Continuous learning is part of the child care profession. And, in Wisconsin, there's an abundance of workshops and other training opportunities. They include the WECA Annual Conference, which welcomed almost 500 child care professionals to Green Bay for some innovative offerings in October.

- You've probably heard of TEDTalks® - the wildly popular videos that showcase single topics and compelling speakers in a very short format. This year, WECA offered "Ed Talks" with three dynamic presenters each talking on specific themes.
- Noted literacy pioneer, early



Dr. Robin Fox speaks on welcoming families and diversity.

educator and award-winning comedian Alvin Irby delivered his keynote on the power of cultural competency to transform learning experiences.

- Our location in the northeast region gave rise to new and creative partnerships. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College students created 10 Little Free Libraries displayed throughout the conference. Faculty and students in the Architecture and



Alvin Irby, founder of [Barbershop Books](#), shares his experiences encouraging early literacy, with a focus on young boys of color.

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Green Bay Conference continued from page 6



Construction programs built the whimsical structures that foster community reading and book exchanges – donating their time, materials and expertise.

One of 10 Little Free Libraries – Giving back to the Green Bay community.

- Along with a warm welcome from Gwen Simmons, NAEYC Director of Affiliate Relations, the annual Professional Development Luncheon included presentation of the Above and Beyond Awards, given to individuals around the state who embody the ideals of collaboration, creativity and dedication to young children in their communities.
- WECA presented its first-ever “Family Night” at the Conference, featuring family-engagement activities hosted by our conference partners. As always, the Exhibit Hall offered high quality learning materials, resources, and the chance to network with colleagues.



2016 Above and Beyond Award Winners.



Engrossed in a good book at Family Night.

Stay tuned for details on next year's conference. If you'd like to get updates on WECA Conference 2017 send an email to training@wisconsinearlychildhood.org and we'll add you to our email list.

Introducing the YoungStar Micro-Grant Program and the Latest News in Micro-Grants

There are some new names and faces behind the YoungStar Micro-Grant team as Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) takes on the management of YoungStar micro-grants. Below are staff members to know.

For general information questions about orders, timelines, or changes to a purchase plan:

- Gloria Campos**, Micro-Grant Purchasing Specialist and micro-grant contact for providers in the Southeastern and Milwaukee regions, offers Spanish language support for all regions. (gloria@supportingfamiliesaltogether.org).
- Amanda Rose**, Micro-Grant Purchasing Specialist and micro-grant contact for providers in the Northeastern, Western and Southern regions. (amanda@supportingfamiliesaltogether.org).
- Chanel Ly**, SFTA Office Manager, Hmong language support and micro-grant contact for providers in the Northern region (chanel@supportingfamiliesaltogether.org).

For questions about returns or reimbursements:

- Sarah Ross Berry**, Micro-Grant Financial Specialist (sarah@supportingfamiliesaltogether.org).

For questions about policies and administration of the YoungStar Micro-Grant Program:

- Sherri Underwood**, Micro-Grant Manager (sherri@supportingfamiliesaltogether.org).

Assigning a specific Micro-Grant staff member to each [YoungStar region](#) for providers to contact has already noticeably decreased e-mails sent to the general micro-grant e-mail, showing providers are engaging more directly with the individuals serving their regions to obtain the information they need. This is not the only update the Micro-Grant Program has seen. Changes are being made to the YoungStar micro-grant process that you may have noticed if you are a provider receiving a micro-grant:

- Reimbursements have gone out weekly to providers since SFTA took over the Micro-Grant Program in





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Micro-grant information continued from page 7

- July of 2016. This allows providers to receive their money more quickly.
- Programs will soon be receiving their micro-grant materials faster, thanks to extra staff support being added to the micro-grant purchasing process (Chanel Ly).
 - The Micro-Grant Program is continuing to work to ensure that there is equal access to micro-grant materials and resources by working to translate materials into Spanish, and ensuring that Gloria is available to provide Spanish language support and Chanel is available to provide Hmong language support, as needed.
 - A focused effort is being made by the entire Micro-Grant Program to increase communications with Technical Consultants (TCs) regarding micro-grants. This means sharing micro-grant information on regular TC calls, including TCs on micro-grant e-mails to the providers they serve, weekly e-blasts to TCs and Micro-Grant staff taking more detailed notes regarding micro-grant interactions with providers that TCs can review. This gives providers the option to talk to their TC, who they know and trust, about their micro-grant.
 - Providers can access current micro-grant handbooks through their local YoungStar office by request ([See the YoungStar Regional Map](#)).
 - The Micro-Grant Program recently added a new vendor that providers can order discounted materials from, "S&S Worldwide," (<http://www.ssw.com/>) to better meet the needs of school-age programs.

It is the Micro-Grant Program's goal to make navigating the Micro-Grant Program simpler and more straightforward for providers, and recent changes are a step in that direction. Stay tuned for the arrival of more Micro-Grant Program information on the [SFTA YoungStar webpage](#).



**Apply for a
micro-grant
today!**

MyWIChildCare Rollout Updates

The MyWIChildCare EBT Initiative was released for production, in Phase 1, in the La Crosse area WREA consortia on October 3, 2016. Phase 1 included child care providers located in Buffalo, Clark, Jackson, Monroe, Pepin, Trempealeau, Vernon, and La Crosse counties. Phase 2 is also on track in Milwaukee County and the balance of state outside of WREA for February 2017. Since the rollout, Phase 1 parents have made 778 payments to providers totaling over \$195,000 in Wisconsin Shares Subsidy payments. Payments were made through 437 active MyWIChildCare EBT cards.

For the latest information and for contact information if you have any questions, visit our website:

<http://mywchildcare.wi.gov>

MyWIChildCare will replace the current payment process for Wisconsin Shares eligible families where providers directly bill the state for attendance based child care services. The new system will issue MyWIChildCare EBT cards to Wisconsin Shares families who will initiate payments to providers for child care services provided to their children.

There are many advantages to the new system. Providers no longer have to submit attendance report forms (ARFs) to be paid for services. Providers are paid for days when the child is absent. Payments to providers are made prior to service being rendered to closely mirror private pay practices. Payments are deposited to provider's bank accounts within two or three days of initiation by the parents.

Online training and contracting is available now for providers statewide. Providers can access contracting and training on the FIS website at <http://www.ebtEDGE.com>. Providers who receive Wisconsin Shares payment must complete the FIS Provider Agreement by January 15, 2017, to continue to participate in the Wisconsin Shares Program. If you have questions about the FIS Provider Agreement, call FIS Merchant Services at 800-894-0050.





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First Inclusion Institute a Big Success

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) works to support the capacity of early care providers with the inclusion of children with special needs and disabilities. One aspect of this goal is to ensure that training and technical assistance providers, higher education faculty, and various supporting organizations have access to the most up-to-date information and understand how to best communicate through the referral process. DCF organized the 2016 Early Childhood Inclusion Institute as one method of providing that information.



The institute was intended to bring people together to create a consistent message around supporting inclusion. Breakout sessions were recruited from across the state and included topics such as the Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence, professional pathways for early care providers, child care administration perspective, mindfulness, and collaborative approaches to serving children in their natural environments.

More than 200 people from a variety of organizations attended the first Inclusion Institute in September.

Early childhood inclusion takes a collaborative effort of families, technical assistance, and providers working together to ensure consistent communication and planning. We are using the momentum

On September 27 and 28, The Department of Children and Families sponsored the 2016 Early Childhood Inclusion Institute in the Wisconsin Dells, through funding from the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge. The institute provided a space for training and technical assistance providers who support early childhood inclusion to share successful strategies and talk about the barriers they face. The institute was attended by over 200 people from a variety of organizations and programs such as YoungStar technical consultants, Birth to Three, child care administrators, CESA program support teachers, department staff, and many others.

Camille Catlett was the keynote speaker for both days. On the second day, Camille led a master class titled “Extending Your Reach: Preparing Early Childhood Professionals Who Can Support Each Child’s Full Potential.” Ms. Catlett is a former scientist from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute where she worked on strategies for preparing personnel to work with young children with diverse abilities and backgrounds. Camille specializes in providing free resources for people looking to support inclusion. More information about some of these free resources can be found at <http://fpg.unc.edu/node/739>.

from the institute to further support the early care workforce. The YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion pages, <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/>, will continue to grow and be kept up-to-date with resources to support high-quality early care and education.

YoungStar Challenge Awards Coming Soon

As part of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, the Department of Children and Families has issued Challenge Awards to YoungStar-rated child care providers who increased their YoungStar rating in the previous year. In 2014, 281 providers received Challenge Awards and in 2015, 277 providers received Challenge Awards. Award amounts are based on number of star ratings the program increased and the size of the program.

Challenge Awards will be issued again in 2016 for providers who increased their YoungStar rating between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. These awards will be mailed to providers before the end of the year.





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DCF Launches New Website

On November 16, 2016, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) launched a [new DCF website](#).

The new DCF site represents a monumental leap forward in both technology and usability. We hope that you find the new site easier to use and more responsive to your needs. Key features of the new site include:

- Responsive web design, which makes the webpage look good and function effectively on all media devices (e.g. PCs, tablets, or smartphones)
- Improved user friendliness and an increased emphasis on plain language writing
- Multiple navigation options (topical, program-based, and audience-based)
- Enhanced search functionality
- Reduced web clutter
- A new content management platform that makes it easier to update and keep the website relevant
- Improved user metric tools that will allow us to make informed improvements and upgrades

This enormous project has taken over two years to complete and would have been impossible without the commitment and buy-in from all of the Divisions. Countless hours were spent evaluating the current website's content, developing new pages, updating out-of-date content, or writing entirely new content.

We understand that the new website is not perfect, because no website is perfect. We encourage you to spend some time on the new site and offer us your feedback. Our goal is to be continually making improvements based upon the information that our users provide.

This new website represents our commitment to serving all Wisconsin citizens as efficiently as possible. In our effort to continue to make improvements to the site, we welcome any feedback regarding your user experience. Please send any comments or questions to:

DCFDLMSBITSTSSWebTeam@wisconsin.gov

